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ords of the history of nature. And as no student of glaciers or mountains can ever pass Muir's work unnoted so one may confidently assert that the student of the early races on the Pacific coast will find in this book an indispensable source of information on the life of these peoples.

HENRY C. WARD

*The sovereign council of New France.* A study in Canadian constitutional history. By Raymond Du Bois Cahall, Ph.D., one-time fellow in modern European history, Columbia university; acting assistant professor of European history and government, Miami university. [Studies in history, economics and public law, edited by the faculty of political science, Columbia university, whole no. 156, vol. LXV, no. 1, pp. 13-274.] (New York: Columbia university, London: P. S. King & son, limited, 1915. 274 p. \$2.25)

Mr. Cahall's book belongs to that class of detailed and critical studies of colonial institutions which has grown with such rapidity during the past few years. Its chief merit lies in the fact that it contains a comprehensive account of the organization and activities of an important, but little known, part of the government of Canada during the period of French rule. It is to be hoped that the author or some other equally competent scholar will investigate as fully the activities of other departments of the Canadian government, for the results of this excellent pioneer study are very illuminating. Though it deals with Canadian conditions, a careful investigation of its context will fully repay any student of the institutions of the English colonies, if for no other reason than for the contrasts it affords.

The sovereign council, later called the superior council, of New France, in session at Quebec, was the highest court of justice in Canada. The first three chapters of the book are devoted to a historical description of the varying fortunes of that body in its attempts to maintain its independence of the governor and to retain its extra-judicial powers. The final four chapters deal, respectively, with the membership and organization, the methods of procedure, the functions, and the administrative and judicial achievements of the council. There are three appendices, mis-named chapter viii in the table of contents, dealing with the Perrot trial, the Damours affair, and the Callières and Desjordy cases. There is also an extensive and carefully selected bibliography of unpublished as well as printed material. No index is appended, but the table of contents is sufficiently descriptive for all ordinary purposes.

The council, established in 1663, was the highest court of appeal in both civil and criminal matters and also, in its early days, a court of original jurisdiction with extensive powers. This latter jurisdiction was, however, gradually limited by the increasing authority of the intendant.

In addition to its judicial duties the council had, for a time after its creation, very broad semi-legislative and administrative powers. Royal edicts, "patents of nobility, land titles, commissions, etc.," were registered in the council records, and in most cases this registration was necessary before the measures could be deemed valid. Of greater importance were the administrative powers of the council. The edict of establishment of 1663 named five such powers: the expenditure of public money, the regulation of the Indian fur trade, the regulation of trade between Canadians and the French merchants, the issuance of police regulations, and the creation of local courts. Most of these powers were later taken over by the intendant and finally, in 1726, the council was told by the king to keep to its duties as a court of justice. In chapter vii, probably the most interesting in the whole work to the general reader because of the light it throws upon the internal conditions of Canada, there is an enumeration of the administrative and judicial activities of the council. As is shown by numerous illustrations, that body, for several decades after its establishment, had an important share in the work of carrying on the government. Its ordinances, at times curiously mediaeval in character, cover the fields of internal commerce, agriculture, sanitation, good order, and some minor matters. Since the council was, after all, primarily a court of justice it would seem to the reviewer that more stress might have been laid upon that side of its activity, but this is a minor criticism of a piece of investigation entirely satisfactory in most respects.

The historical description of the rise and fall of the council as an extra-judicial organ of government, though at times encumbered with what seems to be an unnecessary amount of detail concerning unimportant controversies, forms a necessary complement to the discussion of the organization and duties of that body. The fact that this part of the study precedes the discussion of the membership and functions of the council makes it frequently difficult either to get the drift of the causes of the controversies or to appreciate their significance. Rearranged, the material thus presented would be much more useful. The most serious conflict in the early days of the council was with the governor. After 1675, when the method of appointing councillors by royal commission was begun, the influence of the governor waned. During the following years the extra-judicial powers of the council were gradually taken over by the intendant, the latter official receiving the support of the home government. Evicted from the realm of administration, the council had few reasons for disputes with either governor or intendent and the last few decades of its existence seem to have been peaceful and to have been devoted almost wholly to its proper duties.

Lack of a first-hand acquaintance with the manuscript archives in

Canada inhibits the reviewer from any criticism of the detailed statements contained in the text of this work. The numerous transcripts of the sources incorporated in the foot notes enable the reader to check the author's use of these sources, to a certain extent at least, and the occasional references to printed material give a still broader basis for criticism. So far as Mr. Cahall's methods have been checked by the present reviewer they have been found to be both sound and scholarly. The book is a welcome addition to the institutional histories of the colonial period and is an excellent piece of work.

JAMES F. WILLARD

*Readings in American history.* By David Saville Muzzey, Ph.D., Barnard college, Columbia university, New York. (Boston: Ginn and company, 1915. 594 p. \$1.50)

This volume is designed to accompany the *American history* of the same author, which it parallels chapter for chapter. One of its distinctive features is the selection of the illustrative matter from the whole range of historical literature — "diaries, letters, memoirs, acts of congress, executive documents, books of travel, constitutional treatises, opinions of the courts, industrial and economic reports, manifestos," and even secondary writings. By this method "the author has sought to give the student a sense of the number and variety of sources," as well as to avail himself of the best matter wherever found. Another feature is the frequent use of several extracts on a single topic, for the sake of presenting opposing views or of cumulating evidence.

It is difficult to criticize a work of this kind, where the task is largely one of selection, for no two persons would agree upon the "best" list of illustrative documents for secondary school use. The features mentioned above commend themselves, and are well carried out. One looks in vain for some of the familiar documents which are usually considered essential. Their omission may be either because of their easy availability in older source-books, or because of lack of space. In their place appear selections not generally accessible hitherto in high school work. Thus on the Missouri compromise, instead of the Tallmadge and Thomas amendments, one finds the heart of the speeches by senators King and Pinkney. Lacking room for several documents for each topic, the method of choosing the one having the most historical significance for a given subject is carried out with good judgment. Thus one finds Cleveland's message of 1887 given place in illustration of the tariff as a party issue, while for the free silver controversy Bryan's "cross of gold" speech is chosen. In many cases, however, a series of documents is used. The editor's cumulative method may be illustrated by enumerating the extracts given to illustrate the Venezuelan boundary dispute. They are